

MINUTES OF THE COMMISSION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

December 12, 2014

A regular meeting of the Commission for Human Rights was held on Friday, December 12, 2014. Present at the meeting were Commissioners John B. Susa, Chair, Iraida Williams, Camille Vella-Wilkinson. Absent were Commissioners Tolulope Kevin Olanoye, Esq., Angelyne E. Cooper, Esq., Rochelle Bates Lee and Alberto Aponte Cardona, Esq. The meeting commenced at 10:55 a.m.

Commissioner Williams moved to approve the minutes of November 21, 2014. Commissioner Vella-Wilkinson seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Status Report of Michael D. Évora, Executive Director

A written report was handed out. All new information is in bold print.

Case Production Report – Attached

Aged Case Report – No aged cases to report.

Outreach Report – Attached

The Director reported that he will be attending the inauguration of Governor Gina Raimondo. He was selected to sing the national anthem.

Also, all 350 boxes of old case files have been shredded.

STATUS REPORT – COMMISSIONERS

OUTREACH: Commissioner Vella-Wilkinson will be working with the local veterans group Wreaths Across America to distribute wreaths in Exeter, RI. Commissioner Vella-Wilkinson also reported that she has been nominated for a Veterans Outreach Award by Chapter 9 of the Disabled American Veterans Organization.

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GENERAL STATUS: No report at this time.

STATUS REPORT – LEGAL COUNSEL: by Cynthia M. Hiatt and Francis Gaschen

LITIGATION: Counsel and the Commissioners reviewed pending litigation in which the Commission has a role. Report attached.

LEGISLATION: The Commissioners reviewed the bills that were introduced at the Commission's request last year and did not pass. The Commissioners agreed that the Commission would request that the bills be submitted again this year. The Commissioners agreed that the Commission's top priority would be the bill relating to the statutory change requested by the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The Commissioners discussed the marriage rights of incarcerated persons serving life without parole. Commissioners Vella-Wilkinson and Lee will meet with Senator Metts after the holidays on this.

HEARING SCHEDULE/STATUS OF HEARING CASES: Commission Counsel discussed with the Commissioners the hearing schedule.

The meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m. The next regular meeting of the Commission is January 30, 2015 at 9:30 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michael D. Evora
Executive Director

Notes taken by B. Ross
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S
REPORT TO COMMISSIONERS
12 December 2014

I. BUDGET

S = State/General Revenue; F = Federal (EEOC/HUD); T = Total

FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2015	FY 2015	FY 2016
(Rev.)	(Gov. Rec..)	(Enacted)	(Rev. Req)	(Req.)
S 1,146,066	1,193,083	1,193,083	1,206,185	1,231,273
F 317,367	287,096	287,096	332,950	319,355
T 1,463,433	1,480,179	1,480,179	1,539,135	1,550,628

On June 13, the House passed a budget which included funding for the Commission consistent with the Governor's recommendations for FY14 and FY15 (see above). The Senate passed the budget on June 16 and it was signed by the Governor on June 19.

The Commission's FY15 (Revised) and FY16 (Requested) budget requests were submitted to the Governor, House/Senate Fiscal Advisors and Budget Office officials on September 12. (Submission was due on September 18.) See above for details.

On October 28, I submitted the Commission's FY15 First Quarter Report to the State Budget Office. The Commission projects a deficit of approximately \$13,100 in General Revenue at the close of FY15, attributable to the recently implemented (and unanticipated) two percent salary increases for staff, and over-budget expenses for leasing of office equipment. The Commission also projects a deficit of approximately \$45,800 in Federal Revenue at the close of FY15, attributable in large part to the two percent salary increases as well as expenses for the Community Liaison Specialist, funded out of the HUD Special Projects Grant (which was not included in the FY15 enacted budget).

On November 13, I met with representatives of the state Budget Office and OMB to review the Budget Office's planned recommendation to the Governor in respect to our FY15 (revised) and FY16 budget requests. The OMB representative advised that the Commission is "the model small state government agency" with regard to our development of a cohesive strategic plan and performance measures, and our timely submission of monthly performance measure reports.

On December 1, at the directive of the state Budget Office, I submitted to that office, as well as to House and Senate Fiscal Advisers, a Corrective Action Plan addressing the \$13,100 projected deficit identified in our First Quarter Report.

II. FEDERAL CONTRACTS

EEOC – For federal FY12 (ending September 30, 2012), according to EEOC Project Director Marlene Toribio, we closed 237 co-filed cases.

Our contract with EEOC for FY12 was for 235 cases. For federal FY13 (ending September 30, 2013), we closed 201 co-filed cases. Our contract with EEOC for FY13 was for 199 cases. For federal FY14 (ending September 30, 2014), we closed 232 co-filed cases. Our modified contract for FY14 was for 230 cases. For federal FY15 (beginning October 1, 2014), we have closed 34 co-filed cases. Our contract for federal FY15 (beginning October 1, 2014) is yet unknown.

HUD – For FY12, according to HUD Project Director Angela Lovegrove, we took in 40 new housing charges, 37 of which were co-filed with HUD, and we processed 45 housing charges, 43 of which were co-filed with HUD. For FY13, we took in 51 new housing charges, all of which were co-filed with HUD, and we processed 50 cases, 47 of which were co-filed with HUD. For FY14, we took in 49 new housing charges, 47 of which are co-filed with HUD, and we processed 51 cases, 50 of which were co-filed with HUD (three of these processed cases were post-PC conciliations). For FY15 (beginning July 1, 2014), we have taken in 70 new housing charges, 54 of which are eligible to be co-filed with HUD. (14 were not eligible for co-filing and two were deferred to HUD for investigation due to internal conflicts.) Within this same time period, we have processed 20 cases, 18 of which were co-filed with HUD; one of these processed

cases was a post-PC conciliation.

UPDATE ON HUD PARTNERSHIP GRANTS – The first grant, for approximately \$56,000, is for a targeted outreach (including development of training/education materials) to the LGBT community and victims of domestic violence. On March 17, former Investigator Susan Pracht began a nine-month position as Community Liaison Specialist overseeing the implementation of the LGBT/Domestic Violence grant. The LGBT portion of the project is complete; work on the domestic violence portion of the project is nearly complete.

III. PERSONNEL

No new information.

IV. OUTREACH – Refer to attached report.

V. GENERAL STATUS

●Meetings with staff members – I continue to meet monthly with individual investigative staff members to monitor case production.

●Case Closures – Refer to attached report.

In FY11, we processed 422 cases; in FY12, we processed 411 cases (approx. 3.5% decrease). For FY13, we processed 389 cases (approx.

5% decrease from FY12). For FY14 (beginning July 1, 2013), we processed 376 cases (decrease of approx. 3% from FY13). For FY15 (beginning July 1, 2014), we have processed 146 cases (compare to 139 cases in this same time period in FY14).

●Aged Cases – There are no aged cases in the Commission’s inventory for federal FY15 (beginning October 1, 2014).

●Overall Case Inventory – The Commission had over 1000 cases in its inventory at the end of FY 1998. We ended FY11 with 323 cases in inventory, FY12 with 255 cases, FY13 with 265 cases, and FY14 with 290 cases. As of 12/11/14, we had a total of 334 cases in inventory; 25 of these cases were pending assignment.

●Gubernatorial Transition – On December 4, in response to a request from the DOA, I transmitted to Governor-Elect Raimondo’s Transition team the following: RICHR Strategic Plan; RICHR Organizational Chart; RICHR 2015 legislative priorities (attached).

●Financial Integrity and Accountability Report – The Commission’s annual FIA Report was submitted to the state Bureau of Audits on December 8 in compliance with state law.

●New Letterhead – The Commission has ordered new letterhead to include the names of our new Commissioners. Once we have depleted our current stock, we will begin using this new

letterhead.

●New Commissioner Photos – I would like to schedule a day on which the new Commissioners can come to the office to sit for formal Commissioner photographs, to be displayed in the Hearing Room. The photographer has been contacted and is awaiting word from me.

●On December 10, I met with Cheryl Burrell, the new Associate Director, DOA, Office of Diversity, Equity and Opportunity. We began discussions about the possibility of future State EO/ Commission collaborative efforts.

●Performance Management Initiative – The Governor's Performance Management Team has noted that the Commission is one of the only state agencies that consistently complies with the Performance Management Directive in a complete/timely manner.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael D. Évora

Executive Director

Attachments